

Aethon Tracking Beats RFID Concerns

Aethon, a leader in affordable autonomous mobile robots for healthcare has announced that its robotic Asset Tracking and Recovery System (ATRS) cannot interfere with medical equipment and addresses the critical safety concerns outlined in a study in the June issue of the *Journal Of The American Medical Association*.

The study from the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, was designed to assess and classify incidents of electromagnetic interference by radio frequency identification (RFID) on critical care equipment. The article titled "Electromagnetic Interference from Radio Frequency Identification Inducing Potentially Hazardous Incidents in Critical Care Medical Equipment" appears in the June 25, 2008 issue of *JAMA*.

While many hospitals are working to improve equipment utilisation and reduce costs, the study indicates that the wireless systems in place at several hospitals to track medical equipment can cause potentially deadly breakdowns in lifesaving devices.

Aethon, however, said it offered an effective asset tracking solution, which employs RFID technology that emits zero power. Aethon's readers and portals only listen for tags, and because the system employs a mobile robot outfitted with a passive antenna, the radios and antennae cannot interfere with clinical equipment.

"Asset tracking improves workflow dynamics, lowers operational costs and can positively impact quality of care," said Aldo Zini, CEO of Aethon. "Our technology offers the most effective and safest method of accomplishing those goals. Unlike other asset tracking systems, Aethon's system does not require multiple readers throughout the hospital, which helps to increase efficiency and limit concerns regarding interference."

Aethon's unique asset-tracking capabilities are a result of sophisticated navigation technology built into TUG, the most successful automated courier system for the delivery and recovery of hospital goods and supplies.

Using TUG's autonomous robotic platform, the Aethon asset tracking system employs a single mobile reader on each robot that eliminates the typical infrastructure hurdles of other systems. This translates into more efficient organisation and location of pumps, wheelchairs, monitors, respirators, beds and virtually any other assets hospitals are interested in tracking.

FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital in Pinehurst, North Carolina, successfully implemented Aethon's Asset Tracking and Recovery System as the key component in its material handling re-engineering effort.

Moore Regional was able to reduce costs and improve staff efficiency by increasing their overall asset utilisation and reducing equipment rentals.

